

# Project Success Story

## Institution

Northern School of Contemporary Dance

## Project title

Governance Effectiveness Review

## Background/Context

The Northern School of Contemporary Dance (NSCD) commissioned a review of the effectiveness of its governance in 2020, following its decision to leave the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama, under whose auspices it had operated since 2003.

The School is committed to becoming an independent regulated higher education provider when its notice period expires in 2023, with the possibility of becoming a degree awarding body in its own right at some point in its future.

During the summer term of 2020 a new Principal and Clerk were appointed and since then NSCD has been preparing its application to register with the regulator, the Office for Students (OfS). To inform its development as an independent provider, the decision was made to undertake a governance effectiveness review.

## Solution

The main review comprised a selective assessment of key documentation; observations of meetings of the Board, the Finance Committee, and the Academic Board; interviews with members of the Board, the Senior Leadership Team and student members of the Board and Academic Board; and an e-survey of Board and Senior Leadership Team members.

## Outcomes

The review concluded that NSCD had the fundamental architecture of good governance in place, with positive and effective working relationships between the Board and the senior team.

Most importantly, the governance arrangements reflected the new OfS statutory requirements, although there were aspects which needed to be updated and strengthened.

It made 13 recommendations across five areas, all designed to enhance the governance arrangements and to ensure they were fit for purpose for a registered provider with long term ambitions to secure Taught Degree Awarding Powers.

*“The review met our needs fully and has left us with a clear action plan as we move towards our aims. It has been helpful, constructive and excellent value.*

*“This would have been a much more difficult process without input from Advance HE. Having external input has given the recommendations gravitas and authority.*

**Joan Matthews, Clerk to the Board**